

### REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The title has been amended to overcome the objection thereto.

A new Abstract is submitted herewith as required by the Office Action.

Replacement drawings for Figs. 1-10 are submitted herewith as required by the Office Action. No new matter is believed to be introduced by the replacement drawings.

Claims 6-18 have been newly added. Support for the newly recited subject matter is provided in Figs. 1, 4-7, 9, and 10 and their accompanying descriptions in the specification.

The new claims have been drafted to avoid the issues under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, noted in the office action.

Claims 1 and 5 were rejected, under 35 USC §102(b), as being anticipated by Honda et al. (US 5,592,542). Claims 2 and 3 were rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Honda in view of Taylor et al. (US 4,400,587). Claim 4 was rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Honda in view of Norio (US 5,432,846). To the extent that these rejections may be applied to the new claims, the Applicants respectfully traverse.

Honda fails to disclose the feature recited in independent claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15-18 of queuing incoming telephone calls according to the priorities assigned to their origination telephone numbers so that the calls may be answered in the order of priority. By contrast to this claimed feature, Honda discloses: (1) prioritizing service agents according to their respective skills for responding to a particular type of service call and (2) routing an incoming service call to an available agent in accordance with the agent's skill (i.e., assigned priority) for answering the service call (Honda col. 2, lines 37-53, and col. 3, lines 18-26).

The claimed invention makes it possible to identify an important call based on the originating telephone number and to answer the important call ahead of less-important calls, which may have been received earlier. Accordingly, the incoming calls may be answered in the order of their importance to the person or organization receiving the calls, rather than a strict adherence to answering them in the order in which they arrive.

Honda does not disclose a prioritization scheme for the telephone numbers of prospective callers. As a result, it necessarily follows that Honda cannot disclose queuing incoming calls according to their priority so that they may be answered in

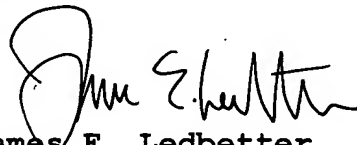
their order of priority. The cited teachings of Taylor and Norio do not supplement Honda's disclosure in this respect.

Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that the applied references neither anticipate nor render obvious the subject matter defined by independent claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, and 15-18. Therefore, allowance of these claims and all claims dependent therefrom is warranted.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JEL/DWW/att

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IN THE DRAWINGS:

Replacement drawings for Figs. 1-10 are submitted herewith,  
with a Letter to the Official Draftsman.